



Los Angeles County  
Department of Regional Planning

*Planning for the Challenges Ahead*



Richard J. Bruckner  
Director

July 7, 2010

TO: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: Richard J. Bruckner   
Director

**SUBJECT: QUARTERLY STATUS REPORT ON BOARD MOTION REGARDING  
PROGRESS OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY OAK WOODLANDS  
CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN  
(October 7, 2008, Item 95-C)**

On October 7, 2008 your Board requested appropriate County staff to participate in the California Oak Woodlands Conservation Program and instructed the Director of Planning to facilitate actions to assist the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains (Resource Conservation District) in its preparation of the Los Angeles County Oak Woodlands Conservation Management Plan (Oak Woodlands Plan). The Resource Conservation District convened a working group called the Los Angeles County Oak Woodlands Conservation Strategic Alliance (Strategic Alliance) to write the Plan. The Los Angeles County Fire Department and Department of Regional Planning has provided technical advice to the Strategic Alliance. This is the seventh quarterly status report that summarizes the progress of the Oak Woodlands Plan.

The draft Oak Woodlands Plan was released on October 27, 2009 for public comment and an informational presentation regarding the Plan was made to the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) on March 17, 2010. The RPC found the Oak Woodlands Plan presentation enlightening and was supportive of the work being done by the Resource Conservation District and the Strategic Alliance to prepare the Plan. On April 14, 2010 the RPC submitted a letter to your Board expressing its appreciation for the financial support provided to the Resource Conservation District to pursue development of the Oak Woodlands Plan.

On May 19, 2010 the Strategic Alliance secured the services of an independent planning consultant to review the draft Oak Woodlands Plan and make

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recommendations for revisions as necessary. The consultant, Ron Hoffman, retired Department of Regional Planning Administrator, thoroughly examined the plan and prepared written comments which he shared at the June 24, 2010 working meeting of the Strategic Alliance. Mr. Hoffman's recommendations were well received by the Strategic Alliance and will be incorporated into the draft Oak Woodlands Plan as it is revised. Central to Mr. Hoffman's recommendations, which was agreed to by the Strategic Alliance, was that the October 27, 2009 draft Oak Woodlands Plan will be reorganized as two separate documents:

- 1) Revised Oak Woodlands Plan—streamlined and focused on the requirements of the Oak Woodlands Conservation Act and incentives for voluntary landowner preservation of oak woodlands; and
- 2) Oak Woodlands Report—comprised of all remaining material not included in the Revised Oak Woodlands Plan, including implementation recommendations such as on-site and off-site mitigation measures, revision of the oak tree permit process, and amending fuel modification standards.

The Strategic Alliance intends to submit the Plan and Report jointly to your Board for review in fall of this year. While the Report is not a document to be considered for adoption, the Strategic Alliance views it as providing regulatory guidance for the protection of oak woodlands that will augment the Plan and that it should be directed to appropriate County departments for review and recommendations for appropriate action such as ordinance development. However, the Strategic Alliance anticipates that the Plan as revised, which is a separate document, will be adopted by your Board thereby allowing access to State oak woodlands protection funds.

As part of the streamlining of the draft Oak Woodlands Plan the goals will be consolidated into the following:

- Preserve existing oak woodland ecosystems
- Recover oak woodland ecosystems
- Maintain benefits provided by oak woodland ecosystems
- Land use regulations and procedures that conserve oak woodland ecosystems
- Coordinate oak woodland conservation, planning, and restoration efforts

Furthermore, to ensure consistency between the updated General Plan and the draft Oak Woodlands Plan, a recommended goal for the updated General Plan is:

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- Oak woodlands are preserved and restored so that they are conserved in perpetuity with no net loss of existing woodlands.

The Building Industry Alliance was represented at the June 24, 2010 Strategic Alliance working meeting and expressed concern about the "anti-development" tone of the October 27, 2009 draft Oak Woodlands Plan, but was supportive of the restructuring of the Plan which accomplishes the objective of allowing access to State oak woodlands funds and defers the more difficult implementation and policy related issues to a more comprehensive County review.

The Strategic Alliance is targeting late summer 2010 for completion of the revision and restructuring of the Oak Woodlands Plan. Once completed, it will be accessible at [www.lacountyOakWoodlandPlan.org](http://www.lacountyOakWoodlandPlan.org).

The Strategic Alliance has not been deterred by the State budget crisis that has prevented receipt of grant funding from the California Wildlife Conservation Board to match the \$50,000 your Board provided to assist in the preparation of the Oak Woodlands Plan. The Strategic Alliance has drawn extensively upon the expertise of its membership to augment the funding provided by your Board. The Strategic Alliance has expended \$46,000 to date in the preparation of the Oak Woodlands Plan.

The next quarterly report on the progress of the Oak Woodlands Plan will be delivered October 7, 2010.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact me or Mark Herwick of my staff at (213) 974-6423 or by email at [mherwick@planning.lacounty.gov](mailto:mherwick@planning.lacounty.gov). Our office hours are 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. We are closed on Fridays.

RJB:RCH:MSH

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